

LITERARY ITEMS.

The Bookseller publishes an article on "The Literature of Vice"—the penny and halfpenny romances of murder, robbery, seduction, and adultery—in which we find some curious details. Thus we read: "As to the rate of remuneration received by the writers of these stories, we understand that two guineas for a set of eight pages is considered good payment; while in some cases, it is to be expected that they will provide enough to fill two or three pages of chess, cost, each number, warranted to contain at least one murder, fire, shipwreck, or seduction, for fifteen shillings." On the other hand, two or three of the writers of these popular stories are vague in their pretensions, and considerable sums are said to have been yearly netted from their sale in penny numbers."

The indiscreet use of a spurious phrase has brought upon Mr. Gathorne Hardy an attack from Mr. Charles Dickens, or some other writer, in "All the Year Round." Mr. Hardy, in defending his universally approved bill for the better regulation of the tropic workshops, referred to what he called the "sensational" reports in the papers. Mr. Dickens (or his contributor) replies, "Let us see again, what does Mr. Gathorne Hardy mean by sensational? Is it sensational to tell the world that a national to all practical purposes is a very exemplary form of business existing under the mask of pretenses, and showing mankind how not to do it? Is it sensational to be poor, abject, and dying? Is it sensational to be a mere officer, when he is nothing but a mere officer, to submit himself under the miserable shag of the hour? Is the commonest humanity, the narrowest charity, sensational? What is Mr. Hardy's opinion of the New Testament?—A sensational performance of the good Samaritan, and a most singular character. The Devil's Army?—What a singularly odd! Their Devil's Master!—Inconveniently and notably sensational!"

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